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# United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific

## Report of the Secretary-General

*Summary*

The present report provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific during the period from July 2012 to June 2013. During this period, the Regional Centre continued to promote dialogue and confidence-building in the region and beyond by organizing its two annual international conferences on disarmament and non-proliferation issues, which served as important forums to explore solutions to key challenges in those fields. The Centre also undertook projects to build national capacity to better combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons as well as to facilitate dialogue among Member States in the region on the Arms Trade Treaty in advance of its final negotiations. Additionally, in its efforts to strengthen its outreach and advocacy activities through peace and disarmament education, the Centre organized events attended by university and high school students as well as an art for peace competition for hundreds of schoolchildren in a post-conflict country. The Centre has strengthened communications and outreach efforts with a view to better engaging a full range of stakeholders in the region.

With support from Member States and other partners, the Regional Centre is planning to further expand its programmes in the coming year, aimed at providing practical assistance to Member States to enhance their capacities to address challenges in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

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The Regional Centre depends solely on voluntary financial contributions to implement its programmatic activities. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to Member States, including the host country, Nepal, and other partners that supported the Centre's operations and programmes with financial contributions and in-kind support. He calls upon countries in the region and beyond to make voluntary contributions to the Centre to ensure the sustainability of its activities and operations and to enable it to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

# I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 42/39 D, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific is mandated to provide, on request, substantive support for initiatives and other activities mutually agreed upon by the Member States of the Asia-Pacific region for the implementation of measures for peace and disarmament through the appropriate utilization of available resources. The Regional Centre facilitates and coordinates the implementation of regional activities of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in the Asia-Pacific region.

2. In its resolution 67/65, the General Assembly expressed its satisfaction for the activities carried out by the Regional Centre in the past year and expressed its gratitude to the Government of the host country, Nepal, for its cooperation and financial support. The Assembly reaffirmed its strong support for the role of the Centre in the promotion of United Nations activities at the regional level to strengthen peace, stability and security in the Asia-Pacific region and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session on the implementation of the resolution.

3. The present report is submitted in compliance with the above-mentioned request and covers the activities of the Regional Centre during the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013. A financial statement on the status of the Trust Fund for the Regional Centre for the first year of the biennium 2012-2013 is contained in the annex.

# II. Activities of the Regional Centre

4. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre focused its programmatic activities on the following areas: promoting the implementation of global disarmament and non-proliferation instruments; enhancing regional dialogue and confidence-building in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and regional security; and executing outreach and advocacy initiatives.

## A. Promoting the implementation of global disarmament and non-proliferation instruments

5. The Regional Centre organized a national capacity-building workshop on the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Held in Bangkok from 11 to 13 December 2012, with the support of the Government of Germany, the main goal of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of State agencies of Thailand to implement the Programme of Action. Over 50 officials from 20 national agencies dealing with small arms and light weapons participated in the workshop, including the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Justice, the Office of the Attorney General and agencies in the security sector. International and national experts updated participants on international and regional instruments on small arms and light weapons, and the transfer controls, trafficking and brokering of these weapons. The workshop also reviewed techniques and shared experiences and best practices on control of small arms and light weapons, including stockpile

management, marking and record-keeping, tracing and arms destruction. To further ensure long-term sustainability, a package of key background documents on small arms and light weapons was prepared in the national language for future use.

6. Prior to the Final United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, held in March 2013, the Regional Centre organized a seminar facilitating regional dialogue on key issues regarding the Treaty and its negotiation. About 50 senior delegates from 19 Member States in Asia and the Pacific attended the seminar, held in Kuala Lumpur on 26 and 27 February 2013. The seminar was hosted by the Government of Malaysia and supported by the Governments of Japan, New Zealand and Switzerland.

7. The seminar provided an opportunity for senior officials involved in the negotiations to deepen their understanding of and to exchange views on the key issues to be addressed in the final negotiation of the Arms Trade Treaty by enhancing clarity and providing useful information. International experts were invited to provide insights and updates on the key topics under discussion.

8. The Regional Centre continued to assist its host country, Nepal, in its efforts to address challenges posed by small arms through its substantive support to the activities of the Nepal Working Group on Armed Violence Reduction. Through its meetings and other activities, the Working Group provided a platform for information-sharing among government officials, national and international civil society organizations and United Nations agencies on relevant issues related to these challenges. Group members also benefited from information and updates provided by the Regional Centre on the Arms Trade Treaty.

## B. Promoting dialogue and confidence in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and security

9. The Regional Centre continued to organize its two annual conferences on disarmament, non-proliferation and security issues in Japan and the Republic of Korea. Both served as important forums for international dialogue with representatives from Governments, intergovernmental organizations, policy institutes, academia and other civil society organizations. These conferences provided an opportunity for participants to engage in informal and candid discussions and to explore solutions to key challenges in these areas. This enhanced understanding of complex issues from multiple perspectives and contributed to confidence-building among stakeholders and to the efforts to seek solutions to those challenges.

10. In collaboration with the Government of Japan and the city of Shizuoka, the Regional Centre organized the twenty-fourth United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues, with the theme, "Creating a peaceful and safe future: pressing issues and potential solutions", in Shizuoka from 30 January to 1 February 2013.

11. Conference participants discussed the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and the urgent need to promote nuclear disarmament. Some saw an urgent need to conclude a nuclear weapons convention, while others favoured an incremental approach. On a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone, participants took note of the challenges associated with its establishment, including the fact that not all States in that subregion were parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear

Weapons, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (the Biological Weapons Convention) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (the Chemical Weapons Convention). Participants addressed ways and means to tackle the challenges posed by illicit small arms and light weapons, and the need for ensuring their proper control. In advance of the Final United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, both government and civil society representatives stressed the importance of reaching an agreement on this new instrument. Participants also discussed the important role played by civil society in disarmament and non-proliferation and encouraged strengthened cooperation with civil society. As has become a tradition with this event, a large number of local citizens, including students, attended the Conference as observers. The strong support by the city of Shizuoka for the Conference, including the overwhelming public involvement mobilized by the city, was highly praised. A special session was held where a group of high school and university students presented their perspectives on and discussed issues related to peace and disarmament with a panel of Conference participants, highlighting the significance of peace and disarmament education and public support.

12. Continuing what has become known as the "Jeju Process", the Regional Centre and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea co-organized the eleventh Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Issues, on 3 and 4 December 2012, in Jeju, Republic of Korea. Over 40 senior representatives and experts from Governments and intergovernmental organizations, as well as policy institutes, academia and other civil society organizations participated in frank and interactive discussions.

13. The eleventh Joint Conference addressed challenges in the areas of conventional arms and missiles, under the overall theme "Disarmament and non-proliferation in Asia and beyond: conventional weapons and missiles". Participants took note of the growing challenges posed by the proliferation of missiles and stressed the need to strengthen existing missile control regimes. Participants also acknowledged the necessity of export control regimes for conventional arms and proposed practical ideas on how to improve the regulation of arms brokering. Furthermore, the challenges associated with negotiating the Arms Trade Treaty were reviewed. The issue of conventional arms control on the Korean Peninsula was also discussed.

## C. Partnership, outreach and advocacy

14. Continuing its efforts to promote peace and disarmament education, the Regional Centre contributed substantively to the student presentations on international issues, held in Saitama city, Japan, in August 2012. Students from five high schools delivered presentations and shared their expectations of the United Nations and the Government. The event included a panel of representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Centre for the Promotion of Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and its Regional Centre. The primary objective of the event was to promote the students' understanding of global peace and security issues. First introduced in 2010 on the margins of the twenty-second United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues,

also held in Saitama city, this peace and disarmament education initiative has become an annual event. The 2013 event was organized by the city and its Board of Education, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Japan Model United Nations and the Regional Centre. It is an excellent example of promoting peace and disarmament education, and it demonstrates the potential for enhancing cooperation between local governments and the United Nations.

15. In July and August 2012, the Regional Centre organized a children's art competition under the theme "Children and peace" in Nepal. Some 400 students from schools in the Kathmandu Valley participated in the competition. Depictions of colourful peace symbols, white pigeons, peace bells and Gautama Buddhas filled the children's drawings. The project culminated with an awards ceremony on the International Day of Peace, 21 September 2012. Through their drawings, hundreds of schoolchildren from a post-conflict country expressed their vision and reflected on the theme and on their own role in relation to peace and conflict, which is important in the transformation of a post-conflict society. The success of the project has initiated a process to pilot a larger peace and disarmament education project for schoolchildren in Nepal.

16. The Regional Centre further continued its efforts to strengthen partnerships with key regional stakeholders, including Member States, regional and subregional organizations, other United Nations entities and civil society, through its expanded communications outreach effort as well as joint initiatives and projects.

17. In this context, the Regional Centre enhanced its partnerships with regional and other intergovernmental organizations, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Pacific Islands Forum, as well as with other United Nations agencies. The Regional Centre expanded its communications and outreach activities to include academic institutions and regional non-governmental organizations.

18. The Regional Centre launched a communications outreach initiative, which included utilizing social media, to ensure the regular provision of accurate and timely information about its work and disarmament issues in general, thereby broadening its engagement with regional and international stakeholders. Materials on the Centre's website include a newsletter, updated information on the work of the Regional Centre, reports on its activities and its outreach via social media tools, including on Twitter and Facebook.

## D. Future activities

19. The Regional Centre plans to further expand its efforts to provide practical assistance to States in the region, upon their request, especially in the areas of training, technical assistance and other forms of capacity-building, in particular regarding the challenges posed by the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, as well as the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the Arms Trade Treaty. The following activities are foreseen:

(a) Combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is one of the priorities for many countries in the region. To assist States in addressing this challenge, the Regional Centre will adapt the successful Inter-Institutional Training Course on Combating Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition and Explosives

pioneered by the Regional Centre in Latin America and the Caribbean to the specific situation and needs of the Asia-Pacific region;

(b) To support international efforts in preventing non-State actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, in particular for terrorist purposes, as embodied in Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), the Regional Centre will work closely with Member States, the experts participating in the Committee established pursuant to the resolution (the 1540 Committee) and other stakeholders to contribute to the full implementation of this important initiative;

(c) Following the conclusion of negotiations on the Arms Trade Treaty in 2013, the Regional Centre stands ready to assist, upon request, Member States in the region to enhance their capacity to sign and ratify this vital new instrument, and to support implementation activities.

## III. Staffing and financing

20. The post of Director of the Regional Centre, and one Professional (P-3) and one General Service (G-7) staff are funded from the regular budget. In addition, the Centre has been provided with two United Nations Volunteers, by Finland and Switzerland, and one Junior Professional Officer, by Japan. The Regional Centre continues to rely on voluntary contributions for all of its substantive programmes and for part of its operating costs, and encourages Member States to provide financial and in-kind support for the Centre.

21. In 2012, voluntary contributions in the amount of $152,253 were received from Member States and other donors. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to the Member States that have made financial and in-kind contributions to the Regional Centre, including China, Finland, Germany, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland and Thailand. Such financial and in-kind contributions remain critical to ensuring the sustainability of the operations, core activities and programmes of the Centre. The Secretary-General urges all Member States, in particular those from the region, as well as other donors, to provide financial resources in support of the Centre's programmes, which benefit the Asia-Pacific region.

## IV. Conclusion

22. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre actively engaged in and supported peace and disarmament initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region. Working with Member States and other stakeholders, it continued to fulfil its mandate to provide assistance, upon request, to Member States and to conduct outreach and advocacy activities. The Centre will continue to expand the breadth and scope of its activities, as feasible, including the identification of new and innovative modalities to provide support to Member States in the region. The two annual conferences held in Japan and the Republic of Korea continue to serve as important forums for promoting dialogue and confidence-building in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and security. The Regional Centre stands ready to expand the assistance it provides to Member States in addressing the challenges they face in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation.

# Annex

## Status of the Trust Fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for 2012

(United States dollars)

| | |
|---|---|
| Reserves and fund balance, 1 January 2012 | 712 049 |
| Income | |
| Voluntary contributions | 152 253[a] |
| Interest income | 5 086 |
| Other/miscellaneous income | 47 998[b] |
| **Total income** | **205 337** |
| Expenditure | 188 638 |
| Programme support costs | 22 081 |
| **Total expenditure** | **210 719** |
| **Reserves and fund balance, 31 December 2012** | **706 667**[c] |

[a] During the period under review contributions totalling $152,253 were received from: China ($50,000), Germany ($46,253), Kazakhstan ($10,000), Republic of Korea ($40,000) and Thailand ($6,000).

[b] Represents cancellations of prior period obligations of $42,477 and related programme support costs adjustment of $5,521.

[c] Consists of reserves and fund balance, 1 January 2012 plus income received in 2012 less expenditures incurred during the year. During the period from January to 31 May 2013, an additional contribution of $33,391 was received from New Zealand.